



## Pandora, Alex and Ani to fight it out

The battle between Pandora and Alex and Ani appears to have escalated.

As first reported by *Jeweller* in December 2015, the trouble started when Pandora Australia and New Zealand president Brien Winther advised the brand's retail stockists against simultaneously stocking US jewellery range Alex and Ani – which is distributed by former Pandora Australia and New Zealand president Karin Adcock.

Winther's email, sent to Pandora retailers on December 14, explained that Alex and Ani was a 'competing product' and reminded stockists about the terms and conditions of the Pandora Authorised Retailer Agreement.

The dispute went 'mainstream' after *Jeweller's* exposure, with *The Sydney Morning Herald* [SMH] reporting about the fight on

December 26. In the report, Adcock said Pandora's strategy had backfired and had only "heightened" retailer and consumer interest for the new Alex and Ani range.

The SMH article also quoted Winther, who claimed Adcock made "similar decisions" when she was Pandora president. Adcock has since denied these reports, adding there was no similarity between the two ranges.

She has referred the matter to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), along with at least one retailer. Nationwide Jewellers managing director Colin Pocklington said he was aware that the New Zealand Commerce Commission was also investigating the issue.

Winther said neither organisation had contacted Pandora at the time of publication.

## Aussie gold gains recognition

ABC Refinery, a division of Pallion, has recently been appointed to the London Bullion Market Association's (LBMA's) Good Delivery List for gold.

Pallion CEO Andrew Cochineas said the list consisted of 73 LBMA-accredited gold refineries, and that the application process had been "very arduous".

"The addition of ABC Refinery to the illustrious LBMA Good Delivery List for gold breaks a monopoly and brings real competition to the Australian gold market. It is an international assurance of quality, which ultimately benefits the consumer,"



ABC REFINERY GOLD BULLION

he explained, adding that the accreditation could be used as a selling proposition by local jewellers. ABC is the only LBMA-accredited refinery in Australia apart from the Western Australian Government's The Perth Mint.

## Buoyant MH figures

For the six months ended December 31, 2015, Michael Hill International recorded global revenue of AU\$306.3 million, an 8.7 per cent increase on the previous corresponding period.

The Michael Hill and Emma & Roe businesses contributed AU\$301.3 million and AU\$5 million, respectively.

In Australia, both businesses reported sales increases in the first half of the fiscal year. Michael Hill generated AU\$174.4 million in revenue, a 3.5 per cent rise on the previous corresponding period, while Emma & Roe recorded revenue of AU\$4.6 million, an 89.4 per cent increase on the previous period.

For the New Zealand market, Michael Hill recorded a total sales rise of 6.1 per cent, with Emma & Roe sales increasing 265.8 per cent.

The first half results were said to include preliminary sales figures for December, although it was not specified when finalised results would be released.

In other news, the jewellery retailer announced its board was considering listing on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX). The company is currently listed on the New Zealand stock exchange.

Michael Hill International was founded in New Zealand in 1979; however, headquarters moved to Australia in 2005.